

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 03867 021550Z
ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEA-10 SS-15 SP-02 /035 W
-----007451 021622Z /42
P 021535Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5098

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E.O.11652:N/A
TAGS: USEGJC, TGEN, TECH
SUBJ: FEB.11-12 MTG. OF JWGTRD/POLICY QUESTIONS

REF: STATE 24222

1. ALTHOUGH QUESTION OF US SUPPORT FOR JWG OFFICE/SECRETARIAT MAY COME UP; MORE LIKELY FOCUS FOR JWGTRD "POLICY" AGENDA ITEM WILL BE ON PROCEDURES FOR COORDINATION AND FOLLOW UP OF ACTIVITIES FLOWING FROM OR SUPPORTIVE OF JWGTRD PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS. POSSIBLE POLICY QUESTIONS INCLUDE: COULD (OR SHOULD) JWGTRD BE MORE EFFECTIVE IN FOCUSING FOLLOW UP. CO-CHAIRMAN ISMAIL TOLD SCIATT THAT WHILE HE IS SATISFIED WITH TERMS OF REFERENCE WORKED OUT IN FEB.1976; CAIRO MTG; WAYS OF IMPROVING IMPLEMENTATION MIGHT BE EXAMINED.

2. AT LEAST ONE EGYPTIAN PARTICIPANT HAS ALSO RAISED QUESTION OF DEGREE TO WHICH JWG RECOMMENDATIONS BIND OR REPRESENT USG & GOE. ALTHOUGH PROJECT DEVELOPMENT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE COOPERATING

AGENCIES, THERE HAVE BEEN INSTANCES WHERE, FROM EGYPTIAN PERSPECTIVE, ACTIVITY SEEMED STALLED (E.G. BLDG. MATERIALS/CONSTRUCTION). SHOULD JWGTRD IN SOME WAY BE RESPONSIBLE (AND DEVELOP A CAPACITY) FOR PRODDING INDIVIDUAL AGENCIES AND KEEPING TRACK OF PROJECT DEVELOPMENT IN AGREED AREAS?

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3. ALTHOUGH THESE QUESTIONS HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED BEFORE, THEY COME UP NOW BOTH BECAUSE PAST ANSWERS HAVE NOT BEEN ENTIRELY SATISFACTORY TO GOE AND BECAUSE WITH MINISTER BADRAN'S AND POSSIBLY OTHER MINISTERIAL ADMINISTRATIVE AND POLICY SUPPORT, SOMETHING LIKE A "PERMANENT" SECRETARIAT MAY EVOLVE HERE. ALSO, GOE DELEGATION FOR FEB.11-12 MTG. INCLUDES SEVERAL NEW AGENCIES E.G. ELECTRICITY & ENERGY,

IRRIGATION WHICH ARE UNFAMILIAR WITH BOTH JWG MECHANISM AND FORMS OF COOPERATION WITH US.

4. RE STATUS OF GOE JWG "SECRETARIAT", BADRAN HAS VOLUNTARILY PROVIDED OFFICE SPACE, ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT AND SOME SENIOR STAFF TIME TO ASSIST DR. ISMAIL WITH BOTH JWGTRD & JWGEC EFFORTS. SOME OTHER GOE AGENCIES HAVE ALSO DONATED SECRETARIAL TIME IN PREPARING FOR COMING MTGS. BADRAN'S ORIGINAL CONCEPT WAS TO HAVE A JOINT SECRETARIAT SUPPORTING JWGTRD, JWGEC AND JWGMC TO BE BUILT AROUND CORE OF MOH PERSONNEL, BUT SEPARATE IN EXISTENCE FROM MINISTRY. HE ASKED FOR US ASSISTANCE TO PAY SALARIES FOR SOME STAFF. US AID/C AGREED TO SUPPORT EGYPTIAN DIRECT HIRE STAFF FOR ONE YEAR, IF BADRAN WOULD "REGULARIZE" RESPONSIBILITY FOR JWG MECHANISM AND SEEK FUNDS FROM GOE FOR FUTURE YEARS. MINISTER WAS UNWILLING TO FOLLOW UP ON THIS, POSSIBLY BECAUSE HE WISHED TO PAY PREMIUM SALARIES, COMPETITIVE WITH INDUSTRY AND PRIVATE SECTOR HERE IN ORDER TO ATTRACT COMPETENT BILINGUAL SECRETARIES & SUPPORT PERSONNEL. A REQUEST IN HIS OWN BUDGET FOR SUCH PREMIUM "PAY" FOR JWG ACTIVITIES MIGHT CREATE PERSONNEL PROBLEMS IN MOH AND BE DIFFICULT FOR HIM TO JUSTIFY. INSTEAD HE HAS SIMPLY GONE AHEAD, FILLING A VACUUM ON HIS OWN WITH TACIT CONSENT OF MIN. OF ED. & SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH HILMY AND ADDED SOME JWG RESPONSIBILITIES TO HIS IMMEDIATE STAFF. THIS USE OF MOH PERSONNEL IS NOT LIKELY TO SURVIVE BADRAN'S OWN TENURE AND/OR INTEREST (NOR SHOULD IT).

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5. DR. NAIM ABU TALEB, MINISTER OF STATE W/O PORT FOLIO WHO NOW HAS A TROUBLE SHOOTING/EXPEDITING ROLE IN S&T MATTERS SAYS THAT HE AND MINISTER HILMY HAVE DISCUSSED QUESTION OF OVERALL JWG COORDINATION WITH PRIME MINISTER AND DECIDED TO "INSTITUTIONALIZE AND REGULARIZE" JWG S&T COOPERATION; BUT EXACT MECHANISM STILL UNDETERMINED. ABU TALEB, WHO WILL BE PARTICIPATING IN SOME MTG. SESSIONS ASKED SCIATT IF US HAD ANY SUGGESTIONS. HE MAY RAISE THIS AGAIN DURING MTG.

6. RE NSF SUGGESTION TO SHIFT "PROPORTION" OF PROJECTS, WE FEEL EGYPTIANS WOULD HAVE SOME PROBLEMS IF QUESTION IS COUCHED IN CONTEXT OF US VS. GOE INTERESTS. ONE CRITICISM OF US SCIENCE COOPERATION,

SOMETIMES HEARD HERE IS THAT IT BENEFITS MAINLY INDIVIDUAL EGYPTIAN SCIENTISTS AND US. BETTER APPROACH WOULD BE TO POINT OUT PARTICULAR US INTEREST IN CERTAIN SUBJECT AREAS AND SEEK MATCHING GOE INTEREST. IN FACT THERE IS GOE INTEREST IN ALL AREAS CITED PARA 2 REFTEL. WE BELIEVE ONE ROLE OF JWGTRD AS ENTITY IS TO SET PRIORITIES AMONG SEVERAL AREAS WHERE THERE IS MUTUAL INTEREST.

7. WHILE WE APPRECIATE NSF DESIRE TO HAVE PROJECTS BETTER CONFORM TO ITS NORMAL INTERESTS AND PROCEDURES, SOME NOW CAUSING CONCERN IN NSF HAVE BEEN USEFUL TO EGYPTIANS WHO WISH THEM TO CONTINUE, (AS A RECENT

LETTER TO DR. ATKINSON FROM MINISTER OF HOUSING ATTESTS). IF WE ARE
TO LET SOME OF THESE DIE, WE SHOULD EMPHASIZE EGYPTIAN COMPONENT OF
"MUTUAL BENEFIT" IN NEW AND FOLLOW ON ACTIVITIES. AT LEAST SOME OF
THESE SHOULD BE IN OR RELATED TO SAME GENERAL FIELDS IF POSSIBLE, EVEN

IF MORE ORIENTED TO NSF INTERESTS AND CRITERIA.MATTHEWS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEETINGS, TECHNOLOGICAL EXCHANGES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978CAIRO03867
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780050-0330
Format: TEL
From: CAIRO
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197802102/aaaadiol.tel
Line Count: 122
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 7f736dcd-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION OES
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Reference: 78 STATE 24222
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3434235
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FEB.11-12 MTG. OF JWGTDR/POLICY QUESTIONS
TAGS: TGEN, TECH, EG, US, USEGJC
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/7f736dcd-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014